


Country of the Week: South Sudan


Venture to South Sudan and you will find a young, hopeful country facing a difficult path to peace, security, and stability for its people.


South Sudanese greatly value heritage and tradition. As one of Africa's most linguistically diverse countries, inhabitants speak over 60 indigenous languages. In addition, approximately 83 percent of the country's population live in circular stick and mud structures called "tukuls."

As the world's newest nation, South Sudan faces many challenges. Still, its people optimistically progress towards a future of stability and prosperity, and many YALI Network members are doing their part to drive development and improve human rights. Read on for three inspiring member stories, and bring impact to your own community by exploring the [YALI Network Online Courses](#). Interested in the rights of women and girls, business and entrepreneurship, and civic engagement, our first featured member, Abraham Bakuenyin Nyanwel, is an avid YALI Network member and volunteer. 

Abraham Bakuenyin is an alumni of the [Regional Leadership Center East Africa](#), and he has hosted four [#YALILearns events](#) where he shares helpful tips and training to combat the country's most pressing challenges. While monitoring and participating in YALI Network activities, he became inspired "to actively engage in sustainable change for his community." As a result, he often discusses the importance of education, especially for women and girls, with his neighbors. Abraham Bakuenyin also explains how the village can use locally available resources for social and economic development rather than keeping them for prestige.

After completing several YALI Network Online Courses and receiving his certificate in [Understanding Human Rights](#), Abraham Bakuenyin is proud to be "engaged with training and advocating for Women's Rights, Human Rights, and encouraging meaningful youth participation towards peace and nation building."

Empowering girls through mentorship became a fundamental motivator in Riya Yuyada's life  during her participation with the [Regional Leadership Center East Africa](#). She felt a strong calling to leave her job and work directly with women and girls in her community. "I wanted to do something that I am passionate about, and I started thinking about my contribution towards building my country, South Sudan, and the whole of Africa," Riya remembers.

Soon she established a women's organization with several friends that they named Crown the Woman: South Sudan. "In this organization, we initiate mentorship programs in schools, encouraging girls to remain focused on their academics despite the challenges they face in a war-torn country, such as poverty, lack of inclusion, and oppressive cultural practices," she explains. Her efforts have reached approximately 2,000 girls living in South Sudan. "Through this program, we connect mentees and mentors for continual support, as well as screen short motivational films to emphasize the importance of educating girls and including women in decision making." Riya also co-founded an initiative called *Play For Peace South Sudan*, to provide psychosocial support for 

traumatized communities, especially children.

While her organization and initiative keep her quite busy, Riya still finds time to participate in YALI Network events. She believes that total transformation for her country is possible through youth engagement.

Khamis Keiwan joined the YALI Network one year ago after discovering and engaging with the [Facebook page](#). “I clicked the link and joined the Network,” he recalls.

Soon he dived into the YALI Network Online Courses, completing the [Understanding Human Rights](#), [Management Strategies for People and Resources](#), and [Fundamentals of Starting and Running a Business](#) courses. Khamis became even more involved when he hosted an event about financially and emotionally supporting girls, which is captured in his photo. Khamis hopes to host and participate in many more YALI Network events so he can continue to educate his “fellow countrymen on the need to protect the rights of women and girls.”

Join Khamis and YALI Network members like him by signing up using the form on the [YALI Network website](#). You’ll receive email updates, opportunities to collaborate with other young leaders, and access to helpful products and programs!
